

diseases and complications showing themselves. In fact, many of the people who spent time near the site may not show any problems until several years further down the line. Even the best experts have no clue just how many of these individuals will actually fall ill of long-term complications from the exposure.

Of course we cannot change the past so there is nothing anyone can do about exposure that already took place. All we can do now is make sure that these victims receive the medical treatment they deserve. Bureaucratic red tape and legal challenges have left these second generation victims overwhelmed by deteriorating health as well as a lack of meaningful financial support from a grateful Nation. Many are going bankrupt under the weight of escalating health costs and the loss of income to their homes and families. And what about the families?

Furthermore, there has been no assistance offered to the many non-responders who worked on the scene and the area residents who breathed the tainted air that entered their homes. These people are also victims of the attacks, and require support for health problems that are only now manifesting.

This is why I am compelled to add my name and wholehearted support behind the Maloney-Nadler-Fossella 9/11 Health Compensation Act. This comprehensive bill establishes programs to monitor and treat everyone exposed to the dangerous toxins found at Ground Zero.

Whether you are a police officer or firefighter, construction worker, area resident, government employee or anyone else who spent significant time at the scene, you are entitled to treatment for any disease that doctors find is linked to your work immediately after the attacks.

Some of my colleagues from outside the New York region may wonder why they should support such a bill. They say it does nothing for their own States or districts, so why bother voting for it.

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I feel the reasons could not be clearer. The diseases being developed by victims of Ground Zero are horrid. Already well over 100 deaths have been partially attributed to toxins from the site. Not long ago, a 34-year-old detective collapsed and died while playing with his young daughter due to complications from exposure. There are victims requiring double lung transplants because of damage caused from dust and chemicals. Others develop rare cancers.

These people are heroes to the Nation. They went in and helped resuscitate not just a city but an entire country that had been shocked, frozen, traumatized and unsure of how to react. It should be a matter of national honor to help these victims who have rushed in where we all rushed out.

I wholeheartedly support the Maloney-Nadler-Fossella bill as a co-sponsor, and I look forward to joining my colleagues and the AFL-CIO this weekend at the World Trade Center site as we rally in support of fulfilling victims' long-term health care needs.

I thank the gentlewoman from New York for her extraordinary leadership with regards to this matter, and I look forward to pursuing what is right and what is just on behalf of our fellow New Yorkers, fellow Americans and their families.

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. I thank the gentlewoman for her really very eloquent and moving statement, and in closing, we must not forget the firefighters, police officers, EMTs and other first responders who bravely rushed down to the save the lives even as everyone else was running in the other direction, as my colleague so eloquently stated.

We must not forget the rescue, recovery and cleanup workers who stayed on for months at Ground Zero in service to our country.

And we must not forget the residents, area workers and school children who lived, worked and studied through deadly toxins and have now become sick.

Once again, I stand on the floor of Congress to pledge that I will not stop fighting until everyone exposed to the deadly toxins is monitored and everyone who is sick gets the treatment they deserve.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that my colleagues have 5 days to revise and extend their remarks on the subject of my Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. YARMUTH). Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from New York?

There was no objection.

PATENT REFORM ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROHRABACHER) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow is a critical day for America. Tomorrow, the House will consider legislation that will dramatically diminish a constitutionally protected right that has served this Nation well. We are talking about fundamentally altering the laws governing the ownership of technology in our country. America's patent system is on the line.

In short, if H.R. 1908, the bill in question, passes, there will be a tremendous negative, long-term consequence not just for America's inventors but for our country as a whole.

It is American technology that has made all the difference in our country's security and our people's way of life.

Those patriots who laid the foundation for our country wrote into the Constitution a provision they firmly believed as a prerequisite to progress and freedom.

Article I, section 8 of the Constitution states in part that, quote, Congress shall have the power to promote the progress of science and useful arts by securing for limited times to authors and inventors the exclusive right to their respective writings and discoveries, end of quote.

Our Founding Fathers obviously held the right of owning one's ideas, creations and inventions as equal to the rights of speech, religion and assembly. In fact, in the body of the Constitution, the word "right" is only used in reference to patents and copyrights. The Bill of Rights was added later.

In short, we have had since our country's founding the strongest patent protection in the world, and that is why in the history of mankind there has never been a more innovative and creative people. It has been no accident that Americans have been the world's great inventors, scientists, and technologists. Black Americans, in particular, have excelled in the creation of new technologies. This was no accident. It was a result of the protections that we put into our law to secure for all people the right of ownership for their inventions and their creations.

Americans were the inventors of technology that produced more wealth, with less labor, and thus elevated the standard of living of all people which, in turn, opened the doors of opportunity for all people.

Let us understand that it was not raw muscle, nor was it the hard work of our people that built this country. There are people who work hard all over the world. They work hard and they use their muscles and they struggle; yet, they live in abject poverty. So it's not just the use of one's physical strength that will change the world and make it a better place. It was not our vast territory and our natural resources that gave us a standard of living of which we are so proud. No, it was not these things. It was our ingenuity, our intelligence and, yes, the legal system that was established to protect ingenuity and creativity that brought us the joys of freedom and the benefits of freedom.

We treated intellectual property rights, the creation of new technologies, as we treated property, personal and other political rights, and that is what America has been all about. Every person's rights were to be respected and protected; and as I have just demonstrated, the idea of the right to own one's creation was fundamental to this concept of the American Dream that was laid in the constitutional foundation of our country by our Founding Fathers.

Today, we face a great historic challenge, and this challenge comes exactly at the time when our country faces economic threats from abroad as never